

When Virtual Goes Viral: Sustaining Excellence in Library Services in the COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Implications for LIS Education

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ABSTRACT

Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, academic libraries have altered their service models and are still gauging the impact of this global health emergency on the entirety of their operations. One of the salient questions to consider is: How do we prepare for a possible protracted siege against COVID-19 while staying connected with learners? More importantly, how do we, as a profession, sustain the level of service necessary to ensure long-term student success in increasingly virtual learning environments? This poster documents a multi-method study involving a number of academic libraries that have gone virtual in the provision of their major services. Phase I of the project entails content analysis of multiple community college and university library websites to identify measures currently in place to serve library constituencies without interruption. The findings indicate a variation in the degree of library online presence, particularly related to instructional content and social media updates. Phase II, an electronic survey of library leadership in the sample, identifies the challenges and successful practices that may influence how readily critical library services are accessible online. Finally, phase III explores how LIS education must be conceptually reimaged in response to a reality that calls for information professionals with a set of entirely new, versatile, community-oriented competencies. Those can only be fostered through persistent curricular enhancements in areas ranging from community needs analysis to disaster preparedness, project management, and asynchronous learning, among others.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

information needs; online learning; academic libraries

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

COVID-19; sustainability in library services